

Psychological Features of Urbanicity

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ABSTRACT

Rural residents find that moving out of the rural area into a city is compelling and considered as a lifetime achievement. As urbanization became popular to Indonesia as a developing country, the urbanicity effect is inevitable. This narrative review explains the psychological issues arose in urban society and the possible strategies arranged to prevent the urbanicity effect and promotes a healthy city. Human activity and the environment are two entities that affect one another simultaneously. By looking up to basic human needs from Abraham Maslow, the urban environment should meet the acceptable safety and security standards as perceived by the community. Second, the individuals' tendency to behave in accordance with their identity is also considered in order to develop the urban identity. This article contributes to consider comprehensive countermeasure of urbanicity. Realization of the impact, benefits of being in nature, use of green spaces and social cohesion are some ways to improve a healthy urban city.

ABSTRAK

Penduduk pedesaan menemukan bahwa pindah dari daerah pedesaan ke kota sangat menarik dan dianggap sebagai pencapaian seumur hidup. Ketika urbanisasi menjadi populer di Indonesia sebagai negara berkembang, efek urbanisasi tidak bisa dihindari. Tinjauan naratif ini menjelaskan masalah psikologis yang muncul dalam masyarakat perkotaan dan kemungkinan strategi yang diatur untuk mencegah efek urbanisasi dan mempromosikan kota yang sehat. Aktivitas manusia dan lingkungan adalah dua entitas yang saling mempengaruhi secara bersamaan. Dengan memperhatikan kebutuhan dasar manusia dari Abraham Maslow, lingkungan perkotaan harus memenuhi standar keselamatan dan keamanan yang dapat diterima seperti yang dirasakan oleh masyarakat. Kedua, kecenderungan individu untuk berperilaku sesuai dengan identitasnya juga dipertimbangkan untuk mengembangkan identitas urban. Artikel ini berkontribusi untuk mempertimbangkan penanggulangan urbanisasi yang komprehensif. Realisasi dampak, manfaat berada di alam, penggunaan ruang hijau dan kohesi sosial adalah beberapa cara untuk meningkatkan kota perkotaan yang sehat.

Kata Kunci

Psikologi lingkungan;
Psikologi perkotaan;
Efek urbanisasi

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BACKGROUND

If we started with a question of “what impact has an urban lifestyle on the individual?” the answers may be varied. Many aspects of human beings are defined by their relationship with their surroundings, such as behavior, personality and values. It is also clear that the existence of a city has its direct and indirect effects on people’s actions and values (Krupat, 1980). It also cannot be denied that the character of people is shaped by the environment in which they live. People who live in a city probably have different behavior, values and characteristics when compared to their opponent, the village people. For instance, urban people have a rapid pace of living whereas the countryfolks experience a slower lifestyle.

When we try to define the environment broadly, there are four aspects that should be distinguished (Mahmoud, 2015). First, the physical aspect explains that the concrete material lies in the environment. Second is the social aspect, which emphasizes the relationship between the people, in particular environment.

Next are the psychological and behavioral aspects in terms of the connection between humans and their environment. We can conclude that the classification of these four aspects is raised between the real, actual and concrete world around people and the phenomenological world, which affects either humans’ conscious or unconscious behavior pattern (Mahmoud, 2015). According to this idea, the dynamic interaction of people’s minds and the environment can also represent a culture (DiMaggio, 1997).

The city is considered a trademark of modern society, institutions, structures and what attracts our attention and comments (Krupat, 1980). People often view a city as a bright light to their life, a place with a

better access and opportunities, to find a job for example. This condition causes many rural residents to decide to move out to a bigger region or a city. Consequently, the urbanization cannot be avoided. Based on the World Bank Data (2015), Indonesia is the second highest country with increasing number of urban lands in a decade, around 1.100 square kilometer with 77 urban areas in the country.

In a developing country like Indonesia, the term of a city and village has been blurred. Indonesians define urban with a circular understanding, which includes “other places with urban characteristics” (World Bank Group, 2015). The physical environment of an urban areas reflects important characteristics of the urban population, including: big numbers, density, and diversity (American Psychological Association, 2009).

In Indonesia, the urban population density increased sharply between year 2000 and 2010, to approximately 9.400 people per square kilometer, up from 7.400 (World Bank Group, 2015). In contrast to its highest rate or urban population density, the average of new urban land built per additional urban resident is less than 40 square meters. This possibly is indicating that the development of urban areas not ready yet to satisfy the new residents’ needs that came from other places.

Furthermore, unplanned urbanization also causes a phenomenon called the “urbanicity effect”. This term refers to a significant amount of evidence indicating that living in cities has detrimental effect on people well-being and mental health (Corcoran et al., 2017). The phenomenon probably being a missed-scope of the development plan in a city or any urban areas. Hence, considering that more and more individuals live in the cities, the psychological condition of the residences becomes important. In addition, the physical environment, as well as the psychological and social experiences of various population

groups, differ (American Psychological Association, 2009a).

Moreover, by better urban-societal planning, it is possible to reduce the incidence of mental illness in urban areas to that of rural areas, saving approximately € 1.2 trillion per year globally. Even a 20% reduction in urban mental illness rates would save approximately \$250 billion per year (D'Acci, 2020).

Faris & Dunham's research conducted in 1939, found a linear decline in the incidence of severe mental illness per capita, from highly disorganized, populated urban centers to wealthy residential areas in the suburbs. Though the research seem outdated, recent research shows supporting evidence of what Faris and Dunham found many years ago. For example, there is more fundamental, causal link between city life and psychosis, and the urban situation have been shown to increase the risk of anxiety and major depression (Jaya & Wulandari, 2018; Lederbogen et al., 2011; van Os, 2004).

To note, with only a fifth of the population in large cities relatively free of pathological or mental illness (Mahmoud, 2015), urbanicity effect may leads to several problems. Furthermore, Evans (2003) suggests that people's mental health and well-being are affected by the physical properties of by influencing their sense of control. Poor mental health is associated with factors such as poor community cohesion, awareness of criminal risk, and a sense of belonging. (Evans, 2003). This shows that unplanned urban condition could affect resident's mental health. Crime is one aspect that became a serious problem in urbanicity, therefore perception of safety is one important aspect to understand the city living.

As mentioned above, people's behavior changes in order to fit in the environment vice versa and they simultaneously shape one another. Humans

perceive their surroundings as limited and perceptible spaces (Mahmoud, 2015), the materials component and non-physical that appears in the form of natural elements, is made by humans and their interaction. Not only does the city lifestyle, which affects people, but it also affects the relations between human beings. Korte (in Krupat, 1980) found that the cities have less social contact among neighbors than in towns (in this context, smallest area than city) and are less motivated to help strangers, which is quite consistent around the globe. The following discussion will emphasize the perceived of safety and the strategies to reduce the side effects of urbanicity, based on recent research related to urban living and the environment.

RESEARCH METHODS

The comprehensive search for supporting literature conducted through the Google Scholar Databases ranged from year 2011 to 2020 with keywords in bilingual, both Indonesian and English. In Indonesian, the keywords used are: 'psikologi lingkungan perkotaan' and 'psikologi perkotaan'. Whereas in English, the keywords used is 'psychological effects on urbanicity' and 'urban psychology in Indonesia'. The writer included papers in English and Indonesian that reported sufficient data concerning the behaviour and psychological construct related to urban society and open to all disciplines. Furthermore, due to possible access of the articles, the writer excludes articles from subscription journal and articles in Indonesian selected from national accredited journals.

RESULTS

The literature search yielded 383 suitable articles. After the whole screening process, including 21 papers were included in this review. Among these,

15 focused on actions to reduce the impact of urbanicity and other psychological constructs in urban setting, and 6 articles about urban safety. The reason why the 362 excluded studies appeared in the search is simply because they have the terms ‘psychological’,

‘urbanicity’, and ‘urban psychology’, in their text. However, even though these articles contained some terms, the terms were not related and completely unrelated to the scope. The list of the included papers concerning the two main topics of this review are detailed on Table 1 and Table 2.

Table 1. Papers evaluating the safety perception in urban community

Author (Year)	Article Type	Study Design (For Studies with Human Sample)
Siragusa, et al. (2021)	Original research	Experiment and survey
Ferreti, et al. (2019)	Original research	Scale validation
Bilotta, et al. (2019)	Original research	Cross-sectional survey
Munggaran and Navastara (2018)	Original research	Mixed method
van Rijswijk and Haans (2018)	Original research	Photographed-questionnaire survey
Jiang, et al., (2017)	Original research	Photographed-questionnaire survey

Table 2. Papers evaluating the actions to reduce the impact of urbanicity

Author (Year)	Article Type	Study Design (For Studies with Human Sample)
D’Acci (2020)	Original article	Not applicable
Adiweni and Djuwita (2019)	Original research	Cross-sectional survey
Sefcik, et al (2019)	Original research	Content analysis
Weijts-Perrée, et al (2019)	Original research	Cross-sectional survey
Papachristou, et al. (2019)	Original research	Longitudinal study
Shirleyana, et al. (2018)	Original research	Cross-sectional survey
Mahmoud (2018)	Original research	Theoretical review
Corcoran, et al. (2017)	Original research	Cross-sectional survey
Stefaniak, et al. (2017)	Original research	Cross-sectional survey
Belanche, et al. (2017)	Original research	Cross-sectional survey
Romadhani and Suryawan (2017)	Achitectural design	Not applicable
Chen, et al. (2016)	Original research	Cross-sectional survey
Kirkbride, et al. (2014)	Original research	Cross-sectional survey
Yuliastuti and Saraswati (2014)	Original research	Cross-sectional survey
Pane (2013)	Original research	Literature study
Nisa and Juneman (2012)	Original research	Cross-sectional survey

DISCUSSION

People’s perception of safety

In order to understand the residential surroundings, physical identification and familiarity of urban planning has become an important factor for people to feel comfortable. However, this all started with the perception of safety within an area. Research conducted by Siragusa et al., (2020) show that environmental characteristics such as background noise, light, landscapes and

urban quality plays a fundamental role in perceived uncertainty. A research study conducted Jiang et al. in Hong Kong in 2017, trying to discover the true meaning of a safe city. Located in one of the most populous districts in Hong Kong, Yau Tsim Mong - Kowloon, researchers are trying to help the governor to create the most preferable way to decorate urban alleys which could be considered as “safe” for both women and men. We cannot argue that gender differences in safety perception is

noticeable. Consequently, physical intervention of the environment related to safety should reconcile the gender differences and create a safe place for both genders. In this study, Jiang et al. (2017) found that having clean, green and organized alley conditions is not good enough to help the community to feel safe. The condition that serves to intensify social interaction and daily activities is more preferable and can reduce gender differences in perceptions of security. This is one good example of how use of places could change human perception. This is one example of how suitable planning of public spaces could reduce people's stress level, considering safety as one major concern for people who lives in a city.

If we look further, the safety matter is highly important when it comes to night time. Streetlights, for example, have become ubiquitous parts of modern society. People might feel uncomfortable to walk in a dark street even though they are familiar with the neighborhood (Jiang et al., 2017). According to this, a potential strategy to reduce crime rates and improve public space security is ultimately to install or improve street lights. Boyce & Gutkowski (1995) also suggested that the main factor that conveys in the impact of lighting on crime and safety. Perceptions is the extent to which people can identify potential threats earlier and face others confidently on the street (van Rijswijk & Haans, 2018). Here we can draw a conclusion that people feel safe in a condition which satisfy all of human senses.

Typical concepts of a secure neighborhood in terms of social psychology, is defined by the explicit differences between the organizational character of the spatial environment and human nature that might be negatively affected, damaged and disrupts one's personality (Zinchenko & Perelygina, 2013). Based on the research conducted in Yekaterinburg, an

administrative area near Sverdlovsk city – Russia, the most significant factor to define a safe city is the social relations built upon trust and intimacy. The conclusion from the research points out that humans want to believe and trust other inhabitants in the same city, along with the convenience they perceived in the urban area. People feel like they have control of their surrounding environment if the city is not threatening for its residents. So that this condition fosters peoples' desires to interact with one another. Other external factors that closely related to the sense of unsafety are Physical and Social Disorder (PSD), which shows the deteriorated and degradation of urban environment (Ferretti et al., 2019). Bilotta et al. (2019) tried to investigate a model to study urban safety issues as the perception of personal safety, fear of crime and well-being are multifaceted and subjected to various risk factors.

Abraham Maslow developed a theory of needs which contains five hierarchical human needs, classified as basic, psychological and self-fulfillment needs (Feist et al., 2018). The second layer of Maslow's hierarchy of needs is safety and security which are categorized as basic needs. As the theory said, that lower level needs in the hierarchy must be satisfied before individuals can attend to higher level needs. Therefore, people tend to find security and safety in order to fill their basic needs. Protection from several elements, order, stability and freedom of fear being the primary part of safety needs. It can be concluded that the second human need based on Maslow's hierarchy is closely related to environment.

Based upon several research findings, we can denote that people perceived safety as significant factor to live in an urban neighborhood. Even though the terms of safety are diverse to each city, there are still a universal message related to the secure

feelings. Human perceived safety with all of their senses. So that if an environment satisfies peoples' senses and then is classified as safe based on their prior experience and or knowledge, therefore they will assume the environment is a safe place.

The development of urban identity

It is often emphasized that environment and inhabitants in one place may shape each other. More precisely, both affect and are affected by the behavior and actions of particular individuals (American Psychological Association, 2009). With humans as a living entity that continuously manages one particular area, then the physical environment contains the accumulated residue of the historical and cultural record of predecessor residents. This idea can be the basis of the following concepts that explain the people-places relationships, such as place attachment, sense of community, and a place-based social capital that provides more dynamic notes about mutual design, individuals, and social groups (Stefaniak et al., 2017).

The nature of the place affects the strength of attachment, but people also can have different levels of attachment of places (Stefaniak et al., 2017). Furthermore, people found most attached to their homes, cities, and countries but in contrary, the connections to neighborhoods and regions are usually much weaker (Stefaniak et al., 2017). In the understanding of place proposed by Tuan (1975, in Stefaniak et al., 2017) cities constitute the "perfect place" which is characterized by relatively fixed boundaries, temporal stability and its embedded meaning. Therefore, it creates a relatively strong bond. Despite the increase in mobility, some key processes seem to keep the location relevant and connected at various level (or scales). In particular, those who are tied up in their place of residence

recognize them as less criminal, less unsafe or dangerous.

As a human being who lives in a community, people generally having multi-identity in which they can point out depends on their needs and circumstances. In this case, peoples' identity which becomes attached upon residency, is appealing considering many overlapping concepts such as place identity, sense of place, place attachment and sense of community (Belanche et al., 2017). Hence, forming the process of urban identity, measurement and behavioral consequences related to urbanization or city living remain uncertain.

A research study conducted in Spain (Belanche et al., 2017), focus on Zaragoza as the fifth largest city in the country, to discover the basics of the meaning to a city and socio-demographic characteristics that influence the formation of urban identity. This was examined based on three psychological dimensions namely cognitive, affective and evaluation and find to what extent this urban identity affects peoples' behavior. There are interesting results obtained from this research. It is found that individual and social representation both affect cognitive, affective and evaluative urban identity. In cognitive and affective dimensions, culture and historical aspects contribute greatly whereas evaluative dimension is specifically influenced by social factors. In contrast, political factors have low impact in all urban identity dimension.

Urban identity dimension was found to be significantly related to socio-demographic characteristics, with previous findings. In order that, urban identity is an indirect effect of people tendency to adopt the identity through personal and social norms. So that both personal and social norms shift the urban identity cognitively into relevant behavioral tendencies. Nevertheless, indirect effect of personal norms is slightly higher than social norms which affect the desire to denote their

urban identity. On the other hand, there is an argument in which urban identity increases peoples' social status. Mostly urban areas are seen as a lavish and splendid place. The next part will explain what would happen if the urban environment does not meet the inhabitants' expectation. Before that, we should take a look to an Indonesian big city, in which the vernacular residential settlement called "kampung" exists and has a contrasting characteristic to a metropolis.

In Indonesia, kampung exhibit rural characteristics and a traditional lifestyle. This area is characterized by high community resilience, high solidarity and strong social interactions (Shirleyana et al., 2018). Kampung houses are usually co-built by the residents since it has vernacular character and close social network (Shirleyana et al., 2018). They gradually build homes, according to their needs through community-based processes other than formal planning systems. Changes within such settlements, for example, are due to this evolutionary approach, which often has irregular alley patterns and narrow streets. At Kampung, fine-grained infrastructures and basic facilities are available. Moreover, there are narrow alleys at the entrance to the settlement, but there are wide alleys and open spaces for recreational and social functions of the inhabitants. But currently, new settlers who were moving from rural urban area also dwell in kampung, together with the vernacular resident. This is surely a unique condition when we talk about identity. People-places bond is not clear for people who lives in kampung. Regarding this phenomenon, the urban identity itself is questionable.

In conclusion, urban identity is something which is owned by people who have a connection or even high attachment level to urban environment. As the identity consists of cognitive, affective and evaluation dimensions to a certain extent

predict people behavior. Thus, to build a good urban identity, physical and psychological aspects related to environment are both important to be considered in urban development as this aspect is closely linked to peoples' perception and attachment to places that may lead to peoples' identity.

Facing urbanicity

When we move to different places, unconsciously we perceive the environment differently than previous one. Subsequently, our behavior shifts to follow the surroundings we are facing. People who moved from rural to urban areas are exposed to this experience. Human instinctive behavior patterns change in crowded cities (Mahmoud, 2015). Such findings indicate that urbanicity can affect and contribute to the psychosocial stress associated with living in a perceived poor physical and social environment (Kirkbride et al., 2014). In this example it is possible to make the neighborhood stressed out because the common living in a city is perceived as wealthy condition. In this state, urban people may perceive their condition with external locus of control (LoC). LoC indicates the extent to which one believes that one's live course is determined by oneself or external forces (Rotter, 1966 in Corcoran et al., 2017). External LoCs were also found to be associated with more individualistic cultures and ethnic minority status associated with multiple mental illnesses.

Supporting the statement above, Chen et al. (2016) conduct research in Malaysia to see differences of urban and rural resident mental health. They chose two areas in Malaysia, Petaling Jaya to represent urban area, and Pontian to represent rural region. This research began with the assumption that people with high personal vulnerability tend to face adaptation difficulties with the

environmental demands. Therefore, people should know that understanding the environment and human relationships is necessary before they move to the city. Results show that neurotic aspects are found to be significant in relation to the neighborhood and psychotic tendencies as urbanization effect. From this, we can conclude that urbanization means not only demographic changes, but also social, economic, and psychological transformation. Moreover, in 2019, Muhliansyah et al., developed environmental adaptation scale to get the insight of the importance of social adaptation in such environment.

As described previously, the needs to be safe and secure alongside with adherence to urban identity, adaptation for nomad residents is inevitable. People have to adapt quickly to follow the urban rapid and fast lifestyle. The dream of living well in the city sometimes becomes a boomerang which proves to be not as fancy as expected. The actual life experience of discrimination, victimization, and helplessness associated with downtown living, supports some beliefs that related to mental health symptoms (Corcoran et al., 2017).

The American Psychological Association (2009) noted that the urban environment has many critical issues. First, the urban populations and intergroup relations issue. Considering an urban area as a melting pot of many types of people from various backgrounds, relationship issues might emerge between dwellers. Ethnic diversity, acculturation, intergroup relations, social economic status must be anticipated by the urbanization community. Evidence of social issues as poverty, crime and violence, homelessness, substance abuse, and mental health in urban cities also need attention. For example, in Jakarta a lot of women experience sexual harassment, especially in public transportation includes buses, trams and or trains. Urban institutions such as families and education

have also become the subject of adaptation in urbanization. Related to environment, physical changes in urban area should be concerned.

In particular, the stress paradigm has been applied to the study of crowds and noise with some characteristics related to the urban environment (Evans, 2003). Increased crowds, especially at home, and higher noise levels, especially during demanding activities, are associated with increased cardiovascular activation and neuroendocrine function (Evans, 2003). Both are related to psychological arousal, but the psychological processes associated with the two stressors are different. Overcrowding of homes is often psychologically distressing. This is the result of social withdrawal that overcrowded households use as a coping tool rather than the direct result of awakening (Evans, 2003). In addition, excessive crowd and noise may lead to discomfort which enhance people stress level. Muhliansyah (2018) also found that crowding has an influence on environmental stress.

Considering the many issues related to the effects of urbanicity, we need various ways to overcome this problem. One finding from Sefcik et al., (2019), they found healthy benefits of being in nature both in physical and mental health. It is also supported by other research that the higher level of nature relatedness in person, the level of their personal wellbeing also increasing (Adiwena & Djuwita, 2019). Based on this, many green area should be available to increase the individual's closeness to nature, which may be difficult to obtain in an urban environment.

However, there are some barriers to spent time in nature found as unsafe and undesirable conditions of local parks, along with lack of amenities in the outdoor green spaces (Sefcik et al., 2019). According to Weijs-Perrée et al., (2019), in designing a healthy and safe living environment for

residents, we could also consider the personal characteristics and personality to enhance long-term subjective wellbeing which impacts on momentary subjective wellbeing (such as secure feeling, comfortable, happy, and annoyed) and short satisfaction of public space in urban area. In addition, public facility and spaces should accommodate stress reduction. For example, a relaxation section can be built with biophilic design as a framework to design public space based on human biology and nature (Romadhani & Suryawan, 2017).

In order to increase the use of existing green open spaces, social cohesion can be a mediator between the usage of spaces and mental health (Nisa & Juneman, 2012). Other research also found that perceived neighborhood cohesion related inversely to psychological distress (Papachristou et al., 2019). In conclusion, social cohesion between neighbour should also be strengthened to reduce residents' stress level.

In Indonesia, to enhance the quality of neighborhood and its environment, the public should also play some roles through community based development that held in the smallest institution in the neighborhood called Rukun Tetangga (RT). In 2014, Yuliasuti & Saraswati found three areas that have dominant implementation of environmental improvements. From an academic literature by D'Acci (2020), the consideration of how mental issues are converted to a global expense caused by urban environment should also be highlighted.

CONCLUSION

In this narrative review, the writer underlined how the urbanicity effect became a serious problem to deal with. Several parties such as governor, educator and researcher play a big part to minimizing problems and issues caused by urbanicity. If we look up to the psychological features of urbanicity, we should consider the safety

perception, urban identity and urbanicity effects. Starting from basic human needs, we need to create a safe and secure environment in the first place. This is not only physical environment but also psychologically. It can be started from the smallest part of the society, in the family it means that considerate mutual relationship building and communication is necessary to build trust and understanding.

Hopefully, trust and intimacy can be expanded to the neighborhood. To achieve this condition, therefore many participatory activities between residents should be employed and strengthen social cohesion. For example, doing social work together and solidarity activities to let people meet and have contact with other dwellers. Along with it, governor and city planners should create the physical surroundings which meet the safety and security perceived by the community.

Participatory activities can also be a significant tool to enhance urban identity. As mentioned above, people and places connections are important in order to build cognitive, affective and evaluative dimensions of urban identity. Furthermore, specific treatment should be assigned to build not only healthy people but also a healthy city. In this context, supporting mental health which turns out to be the most affected side by urbanicity, as a consideration in urban planning and promotes healthy city.

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